

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 2862  
CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT SUICIDE

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2862, the "Campaign to Prevent Suicide Act," which creates an educational campaign recommended by suicide prevention advocates and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to raise awareness for a three-digit suicide lifeline phone number, suicide prevention resources, and more effective discourse on how to prevent suicide.

This bipartisan legislation is designed to help change the culture around suicide so that all Americans know to engage rather than ignore individuals who might be experiencing suicidal thoughts, and it would:

Fund campaigns to share information about suicide prevention resources like the suicide prevention lifeline, which has been shown to save lives; and

Create new media tools to help television and social media know how to shape the national conversation we need to reduce suicide.

America and Texas face a suicide crisis, and we must come together to fight this tragic epidemic.

Each day in Texas there are more than 6 suicide deaths and nearly 30 hospitalizations for attempted suicide.

Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death for Texans and the third leading cause of death among youth ages 15 to 24.

60 percent of Texas suicide deaths occur among people 25 to 64 years of age.

Rates of suicide among Whites increased 12 percent since 2000, particularly among females; rates among Blacks and Hispanics have remained stable during the same time.

Estimated medical costs of Texas hospitalizations for suicide attempts average \$8,849 per patient, or more than \$95.6 million annually.

We need to start talking about suicide, and we need to keep talking.

For this reason, in 2019, I convened a panel to discuss mental health and suicide and an all-youth panel to account for how students handle their mental health and what policies they want to see come from Congress.

It was a beautiful and absolutely necessary convening of young people.

They shared with us and tasked us with the solutions and measures they know will positively impact their communities and their generation.

One problem was raised time and time again during the course of this panel: There are far too few resources available to our young people, especially our young people of color, to truly support the staggering prevalence of mental health ailments and effectively combat the growing number of youth suicide.

Matthew 21:16 says: from the mouths of babies shall come praise, and on that day from the mouths of babies came solutions:

Fund transportation infrastructure in the very communities you scrutinize for gang violence, help the children get home safely.

Create and support more after school programs and activities.

Provide students with mentors and examples of a life alternative to the poverty and violence that many of us are facing.

Support mental health experts and trauma experts of color, who are specifically trained to deal with the unique trauma they face.

I listened to young people share the heart-wrenching truths of encounters with gun violence, the broken juvenile justice system, and improperly trained mental health professionals—if they are afforded the opportunity to be in proximity to these professionals at all.

Suicide prevention starts with recognizing the warning signs of suicide and taking them seriously, and talking openly about suicidal thoughts and feelings can save lives.

Although suicide has long been a serious public health problem, the recent and sudden isolation, unemployment and precipitous change ushered in by COVID-19 threatens to increase the incidence of people for whom suicide seems the only viable solution.

By looking out for one another, matching people with the help they need, and helping those who are hurting feel more connected, people who are contemplating suicide have an opportunity to recover and live lives of meaning and purpose.

For this reason, I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote in support of H.R. 2862.

HONORING FIREFIGHTER BOB  
WEIMER

**HON. JOHN JOYCE**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Bob Weimer for his 21 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Weimer has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community

and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

IN RECOGNITION OF QURISTIN  
WALKER

**HON. LAUREN UNDERWOOD**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Quristin Walker for her service in my office in Washington, D.C.

Quristin joined our team as a staff assistant on my very first day in office in January of 2019. She was one of just three original staff members charged with setting up a Congressional office, a task which those who have done know is not for the faint of heart. Quristin played an integral role in setting up systems and ensuring every constituent, whether by walk-in, call, or tour request, was responded to in a timely, courteous manner that was demonstrative of my commitment of service to the people of the 14th Congressional District of Illinois. She went above-and-beyond in her role as intern coordinator, often giving life advice to young people with hearts for service that extended far past the walls of my office. She was a listening ear and source of support through moves, graduations, next career steps, and more, as an accessible mentor to so many who came through our internship program.

Quristin's respect for all who entered or called the office, cheery demeanor, and frequent pick-me-up treats and Beyonce music for the team proved to be invaluable assets that kept our team smiling through all the joys and challenges of our work the past two-and-a-half years. Although Quristin may be leaving our office, our community in northern Illinois and my entire staff will always consider her Team Underwood.

Prior to joining my staff, Quristin earned a Bachelor's degree from Northern Illinois University and she currently is pursuing a Master's degree from American University. She is a proud alumna of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Fellowship Program. Our office will miss her.

Madam Speaker, I would like to formally thank Quristin Walker for her service to my office, to Illinois's 14th Congressional District, and to our country.

STEM OPPORTUNITIES ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 17, 2021*

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, our economic competitiveness and national prosperity depend in large part on our capacity to

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

lead the world in science and innovation. We need a STEM workforce that is equipped with the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of today's industries and make breakthrough discoveries that will launch future industries. We are having a spirited debate in Congress about how best to position ourselves to maintain our leadership position in science and innovation, especially with respect to China. In debating how much we invest, at what agency, and in what form, we cannot lose sight of a key advantage of ours—our diversity.

Research provides compelling evidence that diversity unlocks innovation, yet we have failed to fully leverage the diverse talent available to us. Of particular concern is the underrepresentation of women and minority researchers in STEM faculty positions. According to the National Science Foundation's recently released report entitled, *Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering*, women hold only 25 percent of full professor positions in STEM. The numbers are even more striking for faculty in racial and ethnic minority groups. Black STEM faculty represent only 2.5 percent of full professors across all science disciplines, while only 4.6 percent of full professors are Hispanic. In some fields, the disparity is particularly stark. Women make up only 19 percent of full professors in computer science and 11 percent in engineering. The number of Black and Hispanic professors in computer science are so small, they cannot be reported without compromising their privacy. In engineering, 2.5 percent of professors are Black and 4.3 percent are Hispanic.

This lack of diversity in the academic workforce is holding us back. It is critical to ensure STEM faculty resemble the students they are teaching. When students see someone who looks like them in a career they want to pursue, they are more likely to see it as an achievable goal. Diversity of perspectives also advances research and leads to new lines of inquiry. Without diverse STEM faculty, we cannot grow the STEM workforce and advance the research and innovation we need to take on the pressing challenges ahead and to compete around the world.

The STEM Opportunities Act would empower Federal agencies and universities to identify and lower barriers to the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women, minorities, and other groups underrepresented in STEM studies and careers. The bill promotes an evidence-driven approach to these challenges. It requires agencies to collect comprehensive demographic data on the grant review process and on STEM faculty at U.S. universities. The bill supports research on participation and career trajectories and the implementation of best practices for increasing the recruitment and retention of minority students and faculty.

This bill also pushes Federal agencies to do more to ensure all researchers have a fair shot at receiving funding for their work. The Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) is directed to develop consistent federal policies for recipients of federal research awards who have caregiving responsibilities. The bill also requires consistent federal guidance to grant reviewers and program officers on best practices to minimize the effects of implicit bias in the review of federal research grants. It requires OSTP to develop guidance for universities and Federal laboratories to aid

them in identifying any cultural and institutional barriers limiting the recruitment, retention, and achievement of underrepresented groups in academic and government STEM research careers, and in developing and implementing current best practices for reducing such barriers.

I have been working on a version of this legislation for nearly 15 years. I thank Ranking Member LUCAS for joining me last Congress, and again this Congress, in making this a bipartisan bill. I also thank the 25 organizations and institutions that have endorsed this legislation.

After the year we have just gone through, it is undeniable that science, and scientists, are critical to ensuring we are poised to handle the challenges ahead. We must act now to ensure we have the STEM workforce we will need. The STEM Opportunities Act is an important step in that direction. I look forward to working with my colleagues in both bodies to get this legislation over the finish line.

#### HONORING FIREFIGHTER JEFF KALP

#### HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Jeff Kalp for his 16 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Kalp has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

#### WASTEFUL GOVERNMENT SPENDING

#### HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. YOUNG. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this time today to warn my fellow lawmakers that the passage of any infrastructure legislation must hold contractors and project sponsors who receive federal dollars accountable for their performance or risk another round of failed government projects, financed or bailed out at taxpayers' expense.

Too often, ventures financed by the federal government have failed to be completed or

simply never worked and, in the end, it's the taxpayers who are typically the big losers.

I will be working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make sure that language is included in any infrastructure legislation that ensures that previous projects utilizing major federal assistance, that have defaulted and gone bust, cannot be eligible to reapply and do the same thing again.

The now-famous Solyndra solar energy project—the first major alternative energy infrastructure project launched by the Obama Administration as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act,—cost taxpayers over \$500 million, but the solar panel manufacturer went bankrupt within a few years leaving taxpayers on the hook for almost all of a \$535 million loan guarantee.

Later in the Obama Administration, in what can only be described as Solyndra 2.0, the Department of Energy committed \$737 million to the development of the Crescent Dunes solar energy project in Nevada, also in the form of loan guarantees. That project still doesn't produce electricity and taxpayers are out as much as \$234 million of the outstanding DOE loan balance if not more. This is after the project received an additional \$275 million in taxpayer money under Treasury's Section 1603 program in 2017.

Only in Washington, DC does this scenario make sense. It is crucial that any energy infrastructure projects funded going forward, especially now that Congress is considering a much broader definition of infrastructure, should build in the kind of oversight and accountability measures that will minimize the potential for more boondoggles.

If we fail to do this, taxpayers will once again be left holding the bag and we will have failed to do our duty in terms of overseeing the programs we support while protecting taxpayers.

#### COMBATING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN SCIENCE ACT

SPEECH OF

#### HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 17, 2021*

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the United States has made great strides in recruiting more women to study science and engineering and pursue research careers. Despite this progress, women researchers remain underrepresented in many STEM fields, particularly in senior positions. For a long time, many assumed that as the number of women earning STEM degrees increased, the disparity at the top would narrow. But that has not been the case. Unfortunately, we continue to lose talented women at every stage of their research careers.

In 2018, the National Academies released a consensus report examining the consequences of sexual harassment on the careers of women in STEM. The report found that sexual harassment is pervasive in the sciences and it is banning women's careers and driving talented researchers out of the field altogether. The report committee found that policies currently in place, such as Title IX, are ineffective at protecting individual researchers. The committee called on Federal

science agencies, universities, and scientific societies to transparently examine the workplace climate, and to go beyond a culture of compliance by taking proactive steps to foster a safe and welcoming research environment.

The Combating Sexual Harassment in Science Act addresses key recommendations in the Academies report. This legislation directs the Office of Science and Technology Policy to issue uniform guidance to all Federal science agencies to implement reporting requirements for all grantees. I commend the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for their leadership in establishing such reporting requirements ahead of any mandate to do so. The bill also supports research to inform updated policies in the future, it seeks to incentivize culture change at universities, provide training for researchers, and it makes clear that sexual harassment should be considered as important as research misconduct, as recommended by the National Academies.

I want to thank Ranking Member LUCAS for his partnership in developing and introducing H.R. 2695. I also want to thank the 24 organizations that endorsed the legislation and the universities that provided input. I recognize that many universities continue to have concerns with some of the details even as they support the overall goals. I believe we arrived at a good compromise that protects the most vulnerable. I also believe some of the concerns are based on a misreading of the legislation. H.R. 2695 does not interfere with due process. It simply requires transparency while protecting privacy.

While sexual harassment in science is not a problem that can be solved with legislation alone, H.R. 2695 helps ensure that the Federal science agencies are doing their part. No researcher should be forced to choose between her passion for science and her right to feel safe. I look forward to working with my colleagues in both bodies to send this legislation to the President's desk.

#### HONORING FIREFIGHTER MARK FARRIS

#### HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Mark Farris for his 11 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Farris has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset Coun-

ty. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

#### IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 2981 SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2021

#### HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2981, the "Suicide Prevention Lifeline Improvement Act of 2021," which bolsters aid for local suicide crisis centers.

This bipartisan legislation fully funds overburdened crisis centers, so that they can meet rising call volumes, and takes steps to alleviate call wait times and make support resources available to friends and family of those in crisis.

Specifically, the Suicide Prevention Lifeline Improvement Act:

Significantly increases authorized funding for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline;

Requires HHS to develop and implement a plan to increase quality assurance, eliminate call wait times, implement evidence-based practices like follow-up, ensure resources are available to friends and family of those in crisis, and create guidelines to carry out periodic testing of the Lifeline;

Requires increased coordination and data sharing between the Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the CDC;

Creates a pilot program to research and employ innovative technologies for suicide prevention;

Requires a study and report to Congress from both HHS and GAO on the plan implemented by HHS to reform the Lifeline as well as other recommendations for improvement to the Lifeline's operations.

America and Texas face a suicide crisis, and we must come together to fight this tragic epidemic.

In Texas, crisis centers handle the majority of local calls to the Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

But in recent years, rising rates of suicide and limited funding for call centers have made it nearly impossible to consistently provide quality and timely support for Texans in need.

Making matters worse, the COVID-19 pandemic has added constraints and elevated rates of mental illness.

Each day in Texas there are more than 6 suicide deaths and nearly 30 hospitalizations for attempted suicide.

Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death for Texans and the third leading cause of death among youth ages 15 to 24.

60 percent of Texas suicide deaths occur among people 25 to 64 years of age.

Rates of suicide among Whites increased 12 percent since 2000, particularly among females; rates among Blacks and Hispanics have remained stable during the same time.

Estimated medical costs of Texas hospitalizations for suicide attempts average \$8,849 per patient, or more than \$95.6 million annually.

We need to start talking about suicide, and we need to keep talking.

Suicide prevention starts with recognizing the warning signs of suicide and taking them seriously, and talking openly about suicidal thoughts and feelings can save lives.

Although suicide has long been a serious public health problem, the recent and sudden isolation, unemployment and precipitous change ushered in by COVID-19 threatens to increase the incidence of people for whom suicide seems the only viable solution.

By looking out for one another, matching people with the help they need, and helping those who are hurting feel more connected, people who are contemplating suicide have an opportunity to recover and live lives of meaning and purpose.

For this reason, I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote in support of H.R. 2981.

#### REMEMBERING THE HONORABLE OTTO BEATTY, JR.

#### HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. RYAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of the Honorable Otto Beatty, Jr., of Columbus, Ohio, who passed away May 14, 2021 at the age of 81.

Mr. Beatty, the husband to our distinguished colleague, Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY, was an attorney and former state lawmaker, a leading figure in the fight for racial equality in Ohio. The couple married in 1992.

As a lawyer, Otto was able to successfully use his Columbus law firm to fight discrimination and fight for a more even playing field for Black and minority-owned businesses.

A true public servant, Mr. Beatty was first elected to the Ohio House in 1979, spending the next 18 years advocating for the disadvantaged, as well as for health care access and tort reform. He also served as special counsel to the Ohio attorney general, counsel to what would become the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus, and chair of the Ohio Commission on Minority Health.

Mr. Beatty was born in Columbus and received bachelor's and master's degrees from Howard University and a law degree from the Ohio State University. His grandmother, Mayme Moore, was a civil-rights activist who stood alongside the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and helped found the Columbus NAACP.

Otto and his family have been trailblazers and strong advocates in many ways—true inspirations to us all. Besides his wife and my friend, Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY, Otto is survived by two children: daughter Laurel Beatty Blunt, a judge on the 10th District Court of Appeals, and son Otto III, a Columbus attorney.

There is no doubt that Mr. Beatty was an absolute giant, a man deep with integrity and great business and political skills. I will remember him for his wonderful sense of humor and how much he adored JOYCE. I was very sad to hear of his passing and my prayers go out to the gentle lady, Mrs. BEATTY, and to all of Otto's family and friends. He has left behind a tremendous legacy in Central Ohio and for the entire state.

HONORING FIREFIGHTER MARK  
OHLER, SR.

**HON. JOHN JOYCE**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Mark Ohler, Sr. for his 21 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Ohler has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

**SUPPORTING EARLY-CAREER  
RESEARCHERS ACT**

SPEECH OF

**HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON**

OF

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 17, 2021*

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic has created enormous disruptions to the scientific enterprise. The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology held two hearings to explore the challenges and learn what is needed to help the scientific community recover. Researchers and their students were kept away from the lab, significantly slowing progress on the research and limiting opportunities for mentoring. Research facilities were shuttered and conferences cancelled. Travel restrictions resulted in missed field campaigns and kept international students from joining their research groups on campus. These setbacks affected researchers and students across all scientific disciplines. Women and historically underrepresented groups were particularly affected. While the full cost of the pandemic in terms of lost research is not yet known, the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) estimates that NIH alone lost \$16 billion of research and the Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF) put the figure at \$3 billion for NSF-funded research.

I am deeply concerned that these disruptions will have long-lasting consequences for the research ecosystem. One of the most urgent challenges we face is the potentially irreversible loss of research talent. The financial pressures of the pandemic forced many universities to institute hiring freezes for faculty positions. The STEM faculty job market con-

tracted as much as 70 percent in 2020. Early career researchers are the most vulnerable to this contraction, even if it is not permanent. Too many are currently in limbo. After years of hard work and an enormous investment of resources to train these scholars, we simply cannot afford to let them slip through the cracks. If we are to keep ahead of our global competitors and ensure our security and prosperity, we must act now to mitigate a loss of human capital that would take decades to recoup.

The Supporting Early-Career Researchers Act provides a bridge to help recent Ph.D. graduates stay on their chosen career path as they weather this turbulent period. The legislation establishes a two-year, \$250 million agency-wide early career fellowship pilot program at NSF. This will enable two cohorts of 1,600 fellows working in all STEM disciplines to carry out their research at the U.S. institutions of their choosing.

More than 30 organizations have endorsed H.R. 144. I want to thank Ranking Member LUCAS for joining me in introducing this bill and bringing it to the House Floor. I look forward to working with my colleagues in both bodies to see it enacted and funded quickly.

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. GLENN THOMPSON**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, due to a death in the family, I was unable to cast my vote on May 14, 2021.

Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 143.

**PUPPIES ASSISTING WOUNDED  
SERVICEMEMBERS FOR VET-  
ERANS THERAPY ACT**

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 12, 2021*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1448, the "PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act," which is bipartisan legislation that directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on dog training therapy, and to amend title 38 of the United States Code to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide service dogs to veterans with mental illnesses who do not have mobility impairments.

This legislation will reduce veteran suicide connected to mental health conditions by partnering veterans experiencing symptoms of PTSD and other post-deployment issues with service dogs through a Department of Veterans Affairs pilot program.

Dog therapy programs have a track record of reducing symptoms associated with PTSD, and through this pilot program, veterans are expected to experience an improved quality of life and ability to reenter society as well as increased chances of survival.

Many veterans have had their lives changed—in some cases, saved—by service

dogs, and this bill would expand this treatment by launching a pilot program to make veterans with mental health issues such as depression eligible to receive service dogs.

According to a report from the Department of Veteran Affairs:

the number of veterans with mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance use disorders increased from 27 percent in 2001 to more than 40 percent in 2014, and an average of 20 veterans per day died by suicide in 2014;

11 to 20 out of every 100 veterans (or between 11 and 20 percent) who served in operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom have PTSD in a given year;

12 out of every 100 Gulf War Veterans (or 12 percent) have PTSD in a given year; and An average of 20 veterans a day die by suicide.

PTSD symptoms can include crippling anxiety, emotional control issues, fear of public spaces, drug abuse, and most tragically, suicide.

A recent study led by the Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine, found that veterans with service dogs produce more cortisol, a biomarker used as a metric of the effects of chronic and acute stress, than military veterans without a service dog in the home.

Moreover, veterans with service dogs reported having lower levels of anxiety, anger, sleep disturbances, and less alcohol abuse compared to veterans without service dogs.

We must do everything possible to combat veteran suicide, including innovative treatments like service dog therapy that address post-deployment mental health conditions.

Our veterans deserve every tool in the toolbox when it comes to their mental health, which is why I'm proud that this legislation encourages dog training therapy for veterans.

Congress can, and must, give veterans the opportunity to utilize the treatments that work best for them.

**HONORING FIREFIGHTER CHARLIE  
TEETS II**

**HON. JOHN JOYCE**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Charlie Teets II for his 21 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Teets has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and

wish him continued health, safety, and success.

IN RECOGNITION OF LONDON  
BAILEY

**HON. LAUREN UNDERWOOD**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Landon Bailey for his service in my office in Washington, D.C.

Landon joined our office as scheduler at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. As our office transitioned to maximum telework status in March 2020 and we learned to serve Illinois' 14th District remotely, Landon played an integral role. He enthusiastically rolled up his sleeves and demonstrated patience, perseverance, and dedication to learning a new job, integrating with a new team, and serving the people of the 14th District of Illinois, all without the benefit of ever working in a physical office environment or meeting his colleagues face-to-face. While taking on that particular challenge is an experience shared by more than a few Americans during the coronavirus pandemic, the grace, humor, and kindness with which he approached the challenge sets him apart.

During his tenure, Landon shifted our external and internal scheduling processes from a primarily in-person operation to a primarily virtual operation. He learned and taught others how to Zoom, use Teams, and participate in hearings via WebEx—and often navigate multiple virtual events simultaneously. He liaised with hundreds of constituents and made sure each of them was able to connect with our office. Without his efforts, our District would not have been as well-served during this challenging time.

Landon's collegiality, get-it-done attitude, and grace under pressure were invaluable assets as we worked to keep our community safe, healthy, and informed in this unprecedented year.

Prior to joining my staff, Landon earned a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Delaware State University, where he was a member of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. and The Men of Color Alliance. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Public Administration from Wilmington University. I am grateful he chose to continue his career in public service by joining my office. Our office will miss his daily updates on our morning calls, his unfailing love for Delaware State University, and his ability to narrate an impromptu team-building holiday fashion show like a pro.

Madam Speaker, I would like to formally thank Landon Bailey for his service to my office, to Illinois's 14th Congressional District, and to our country.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT  
OF DR. DEBRA A. DRAPER

**HON. MARK TAKANO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to honor the service of Dr. Debra A.

Draper, a Director of Health Care at the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), on the occasion of her upcoming retirement. Dr. Draper spent 14 years of her career at GAO, primarily overseeing evaluations of federal health care services for veterans and military servicemembers. Dr. Draper brought with her to GAO more than 25 years of experience in health care administration, health services research, and health care consulting, as well as a Ph.D. in Health Services Organization and Research.

As she retires, Dr. Draper will leave a lasting legacy—not only at GAO, but at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and here in Congress. As Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I am especially grateful for the work Dr. Draper and her teams have done for this committee. As a Director at GAO, Dr. Draper has issued at least 80 written products, more than 45 of which were reports or written testimony prepared at the request or mandate of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Dr. Draper and her teams have made hundreds of recommendations to improve the delivery of health care services to our nation's veterans, the majority of which have been implemented.

Since 2010, Dr. Draper has testified at 12 hearings convened by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs or its Subcommittees. She has been a trusted voice and provided meaningful insights on numerous issues within the Committee's jurisdiction. However, Dr. Draper's most significant contributions as a hearing witness have been on the topic of veterans' wait times for appointments at VA medical facilities, an issue that captured nationwide media attention in 2014. Dr. Draper's testimony and subsequent reports on this topic has been invaluable to helping the Committee understand VA's appointment scheduling processes and the lack of transparency in VA's reported wait times. Dr. Draper's body of work will continue to guide the Committee's oversight in this area, even after her retirement.

In 2015, GAO added VA health care to its biennial High Risk List, which focuses attention on federal programs and government operations that are most vulnerable to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement. In designating VA health care as a high-risk area, GAO identified five areas of concern: (1) ambiguous policies and inconsistent processes; (2) inadequate oversight and accountability; (3) information technology challenges; (4) inadequate training for VA staff; and (5) unclear resource needs and allocation priorities. Since 2015, amid significant leadership instability at VA, Dr. Draper has diligently monitored the Department's response to GAO's high-risk designation, engaging in countless meetings with VA officials and providing ongoing feedback on the Department's plans for addressing GAO's five areas of concern. While VA still has a significant amount of work to do to meet GAO's criteria for removal from the High Risk List, Dr. Draper has established a solid foundation for evaluating VA's future progress.

Please join me in thanking Dr. Draper for her many years of dedicated GAO service, which will have a lasting impact on veterans, VA, and the Congress. Throughout her time at GAO, she has been a highly respected leader, supervisor, mentor, and colleague, and she

will undoubtedly be missed by those who have worked closely with her. My House Committee on Veterans' Affairs colleagues and I, and our staffs, congratulate her and wish her well in her richly deserved retirement.

H.R. 210, RURAL STEM EDUCATION  
RESEARCH ACT

**HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I was proud to join Ranking Member Lucas in introducing his Rural STEM Education Research Act. Access to high-quality STEM education has too long been place-based. For students who grow up in rural areas of this country, even in states that boast some of the world's best research universities, a STEM career may seem unattainable. Many rural students have never met a practicing scientist or engineer. Their teachers often struggle with limited resources for the STEM curriculum. It is unlikely that their schools have well equipped science laboratories that may provide hands-on experiences that are known to inspire scientific curiosity and a love of STEM at an early age. The nearest science museum may be too far for a field trip, if the district can even afford to transport them. And broadband access remains an urgent challenge.

Yet we know with certainty that talent for science has nothing to do with one where is born, any more than it has to do with the color of one's skin or one's gender. Our country is filled with smart young people from all backgrounds who may one day contribute to our science and innovation leadership. In fact, we need them to contribute to our science and innovation future if we are to continue to compete on the global stage and develop solutions to our most pressing challenges. But these young people must first see it as a possibility for themselves, and that starts with access to high-quality STEM education and hands-on research experiences in their local schools.

The Rural STEM Education Act provides for research and development to increase access to STEM education opportunities in rural schools and to provide teachers with the resources they need to teach more effectively. The bill also directs the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to develop a prize competition to advance research and development of creative technologies for expanded broadband access. This bill further provides for assessments of Federal investments in rural STEM education to be conducted by the National Academies and the Government Accountability Office.

H.R. 210 is a good, bipartisan bill. I am pleased that the House passed it today along with a series of other bills focused on growing, diversifying, and strengthening our STEM workforce for the future. I look forward to working with Ranking Member Lucas and colleagues in both bodies to enact all of these bills.

HONORING FIREFIGHTER JUSTIN  
BLUBAUGH

**HON. JOHN JOYCE**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Justin Blubaugh for his 16 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Blubaugh has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

#### NATIVE AMERICAN CHILD PROTECTION ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 12, 2021*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1688, the "Native American Child Protection Act," ("NACPA") which authorizes three programs aimed at ensuring that Tribes have the tools they need to treat, prevent, investigate, and prosecute instances of family violence, child abuse, and child neglect involving Native American children and families.

The original version of these programs passed as part of then-Senator John McCain's Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act, but the programs were never fully funded and have not been reauthorized by Congress.

This legislation would do the following:

Establish a new National Indian Resource Services Center to provide tribes with technical assistance, advice, and training on addressing child abuse, family violence, and child neglect.

Support efforts to improve intergovernmental coordination between federal and tribal personnel responding to those issues.

Authorize grants through the Indian Child Abuse Treatment Grant Program to establish treatment programs and culturally appropriate services for the victims of child abuse and neglect in Indian Country.

Authorize formula grants to Tribes under the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Program to support the hiring of caseworkers and the establishment and ex-

pansion of tribal programs that investigate, prosecute, and prevent incidents of child abuse, child neglect, and family violence in Indian Country.

American Indian and Alaska Native children and their families who experience child maltreatment or family violence often have few opportunities to find accessible, culturally-appropriate services to help them address the trauma from these events.

Furthermore, prevention funding is almost non-existent for this population, removing opportunities to prevent trauma—before it happens and avoid families and children slipping into crisis.

The federal government has a solemn responsibility to ensure that the most vulnerable members of Indigenous communities—children—are protected.

Guarding against crimes committed against our Native communities will always be one of my highest priorities, and this bill is a strong step in the right direction.

Native communities must have the support and resources necessary to help children learn, grow, and live healthy lives.

In Texas and across the country, too many Indigenous children have been victims of violence, abuse, and neglect.

The Federal government has an urgent responsibility to these children, and we should be doing all that we can to help them secure a bright future.

This legislation fulfills a promise made years ago to address the impact of abuse of Native children in federally-run boarding schools and prevent anything like it from ever happening again.

This promise was never fulfilled because these programs were never funded, and the Tribes never received the support they needed.

This is why we must pass this bill: to finally uphold our responsibility to help Tribes ensure that Native American children are safe and healthy.

This legislation will help ensure that the Federal government is upholding its commitments to help tribes and tribal organizations protect the next generation.

Every Native child must have access to community-based, culturally appropriate services that help them grow up safe, healthy, and spiritually strong—free from abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, and the damaging effects of substance abuse.

For this reason, I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote in support of H.R. 1688.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON**

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, on Roll Call No. 138 on Agreeing to the Waters of California Part B Amendment En Bloc No. 1 for H.R. 2547, the Comprehensive Debt Collection Improvement Act and Roll Call No. 143 on passage for H.R. 1065, the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, I was unable to vote.

Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 138, and YEA on Roll Call No. 143.

IN RECOGNITION OF CAPTAIN  
GEORGE SIRAGUSA

**HON. JENNIFER WEXTON**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Ms. WEXTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Captain George Siragusa (USN, Ret.) on his retirement as the longtime Board Chair for Virginia's 10th Congressional District, Service Academy Advisory Board.

Captain Siragusa has served on the board since 2010 and as the Virginia District 10 Board Chairman since 2014. The board has a body of over fifty military officers who annually screen high school students applying for a Congressional Nomination, a requirement for eligibility to obtain an appointment to the four Federal Service Academies. Under Captain Siragusa's leadership, the board has successfully recommended nomination and subsequent admission to over 150 future members of the United States Armed Services to the four service academies. In addition to his leadership to the board members, Captain Siragusa has served as an advisor and mentor to many of the candidates as they entered this rigorous and challenging endeavor.

Outside of his service with the Federal Service Academy Advisory Board, Captain Siragusa is a private sector consulting firm entrepreneur, investor, and adviser. He is also a seasoned leader-instructor at the university level for 10 years, having taught at the United States Naval Academy, George Washington University, Wake Forest University, and currently George Mason University where he is an adjunct professor at their Volgenau School of Engineering. He also serves as a Senior Business Adviser and Counselor to over 100 clients in his portfolio at the George Mason's Enterprise Center's Small Business Development Center.

I congratulate Captain Siragusa on his retirement and thank him for his service to Virginia's 10th Congressional District. I wish nothing but the best in all his future endeavors.

HONORING FIREFIGHTER RICK  
SANNER

**HON. JOHN JOYCE**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Rick Sanner for his 26 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Sanner has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

## MSI STEM ACHIEVEMENT ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 17, 2021*

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the United States is facing grave challenges on many fronts. We are only beginning to emerge from a global pandemic, with the outlook still uncertain. Our critical infrastructure, our Federal agencies, and companies across all sectors are being hacked. We are racing to mitigate the destructive effects of climate change. Our economic competitiveness is threatened as competitors like China invest heavily in science and technology.

To solve these problems, we need a cadre of trained scientists and engineers pushing the boundaries of what we know and what we can achieve. So far, we have led the world in science and innovation with a STEM workforce that does not come close to representing the diversity of our nation. When a Black woman, Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett, is at the center of developing the mRNA vaccine that is helping us conquer the pandemic, we treat it as exceptional, instead of expected. If we maintain such a narrow perspective on who should be a scientist, if we continue to leave behind so much of our nation's brainpower, we cannot succeed.

The good news is, we have highly successful models for increasing the diversity of STEM graduates. Minority serving institutions have long played a critical role in training and educating students of color in STEM fields. Student bodies at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) are the most diverse in the nation. These and other minority serving institutions (MSIs) offer access to STEM education and a pathway to research or other STEM careers to students who might otherwise have limited opportunities. MSIs employ tailored initiatives, policies, and practices that meet students where they are, academically, financially, and socially, while moving students toward higher levels of academic achievement.

For instance, HBCUs play an outsized role in educating African American STEM graduates. While HBCUs make up only 3 percent of the nation's colleges and universities, they graduate 32 percent of African American students earning bachelor's degrees in the physical sciences, 29 percent in mathematics, and 27 percent in the biological sciences. One quarter of African Americans with STEM PhDs earned their bachelor's degree at an HBCU.

MSIs have a proven track record of recruiting, retaining, and graduating underrepresented minority students with STEM degrees. However, more investment and outreach is needed to enable MSIs to fully realize their potential to contribute to the STEM workforce. The MSI STEM Achievement Act pro-

vides for increased transparency, accountability, and accessibility of Federal STEM education and research funding for MSIs. The bill directs the Government Accountability Office to compile an inventory of programs targeted to MSIs and make recommendations for how agencies can increase competitiveness of MSIs in such programs. The bill also supports research on the challenges and successes MSIs have had in contributing to the STEM workforce, including support for MSI Centers of Innovation to help scale up successful practices pioneered at MSIs. Finally, the bill requires the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to issue policy guidance for Federal science agencies to improve outreach to MSIs in order to increase awareness of and competitiveness in agency funding opportunities.

I want to thank Rep. WALTZ for joining me in introducing this bipartisan legislation. I also want to thank the 24 organizations and institutions that have endorsed H.R. 2027.

MSIs have charted a course to developing the diverse STEM workforce we need to ensure continued leadership in science and innovation. Let us empower these institutions, and others, to build on that success. I look forward to seeing a companion in the Senate and working with my colleagues in both bodies to get this legislation enacted.

## CHIEF STANDING BEAR NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 12, 2021*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 810, legislation which authorizes the Department of the Interior to conduct a feasibility study of the Chief Standing Bear National Historic Trail.

From his birth on the banks of the Niobrara River in Nebraska until his death in 1908, Chief Standing Bear spent his life in a constant struggle to gain equality and justice for Native Americans.

Chief Standing Bear and the Ponca Tribe were forced in 1877 by federal treaty to leave their homeland in Nebraska for Indian Territory in what is now Oklahoma.

The hardship of travel and the conditions of Indian Territory caused the deaths of many members of the tribe, including Chief Standing Bear's son.

Determined to bury his son in his homeland, Chief Standing Bear led 30 members of his tribe back to Nebraska, where federal authorities detained him.

As a result, Chief Standing Bear became the first Native American recognized as a person in a federal court decision rendered in Omaha at the trial following his return.

Standing Bear's case, *United States, ex rel. Standing Bear, v. George Crook*, started in May 1879. The U.S. government argued, "that [Standing Bear] was neither a citizen, nor a person, so he could not sue the government."

Standing Bear's lawyers argued that under the Fourteenth Amendment, Standing Bear and his fellow Ponca were both citizens and people and entitled to the same constitutional rights as other citizens of the United States.

The court fundamentally agreed with Standing Bear, writing, "That an Indian is a PERSON within the meaning of the laws of the United States . . ."

Following the decision, the judge released Standing Bear and his people, and they returned to their lands by the Niobrara where Standing Bear finally buried his son.

The Chief Standing Bear National Historic Trail tracks the 550-mile path traces the journey the native Poncas were forced to make in 1877 to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma.

The trail also marks the route the tribe took in 1879, when they returned to their homelands in present-day Nebraska.

The nation has invested a great deal in protecting national parks and historic places due to their unique beauty, typographical features, or historic relevance.

The stories that make up the American experience have, for far too long, been limited to those of one group of Americans.

The limited view of what is of value or interest to the American public has changed with the establishment of a Native American History Museum and most recently the opening of the National African American History and Culture on the Mall.

The "whites-only" version of American history must end and at the same time we can make room for other American stories.

The history of the United States is more complex and immensely richer than would be apparent if we only consider the history of one group of people.

For this reason, last Congress I rose in support of the Emancipation National Historic Trail Act, which helped establish the Emancipation National Historical Trail, which will tell the story of African Americans and will preserve for future generations the rich history of the newlyfreed slaves who journeyed to Houston in search of economic and political opportunity, and greater religious and cultural freedom.

Similarly, the development and designation of the Chief Standing Bear trail is one more important step in the ongoing goal to educate the public about Chief Standing Bear and the Ponca tribe's forced relocation to Oklahoma.

This story transcends race, ethnicity, culture, and serves as a starting point to bringing about a greater understanding of tribal sovereignty, tribal rights, human rights, and equality for all peoples.

The establishment of this trail will increase the general public's knowledge and awareness of the story of Ponca Chief Standing Bear, including his journey to Oklahoma and back and the historic court case in Omaha.

For this reason, I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote in support of H.R. 810.

## HONORING FIREFIGHTER RANDY DIRIENZO

**HON. JOHN JOYCE**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Randy Dirienzo for his 36 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.



Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Dierenzo has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

#### HONORING ROBERT STENSURD AS IOWAN OF THE WEEK

#### HON. CYNTHIA AXNE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mrs. AXNE. Madam Speaker, as Mental Health Month begins, I rise to ask the House of Representatives to join me in honoring Drake University Graduate Professor of the School of Education's Department of Leadership, Counseling and Adult Development, Robert Stensrud.

Professor Stensrud has been serving Iowa and its residents since he moved from Minnesota in 1970. He has dedicated his career to serving those with mental health needs and disabilities. He began his post-college career working with the Iowa Department of Education's Rehabilitation Education and Services Branch. It was here where he provided vocational rehabilitation at the State Mental Health Institute serving inpatients experiencing acute psychosis, substance abuse, and related disorders. In this position, he began to understand the importance of having a solid, dependable, and loving community. Most people who were released from his care did not have a community to return to, so they often struggled to survive in society.

Professor Stensrud has since dedicated his career to ensuring that all people feel important and seen. Some of his recent research highlights the childhood to prison pipeline and school to prison pipeline, where without a sense of community and belonging, many individuals find themselves in less than ideal circumstances to combat their feeling of being an outcast. Professor Stensrud understood that in order to make a difference, it is essential to work with students from a young age to help combat these issues. Professor Stensrud has done research through a LAUNCH Grant funded by Drake Head Start and the Iowa Department of Public Health on how mental health consultation can help improve coordination services for kids and their families, as well as how to train teachers and first responders to identify signs of trauma in children and act accordingly.

Professor Stensrud's next project will center around documenting the history and current operations of legacy farms in Iowa. Maintain-

ing long-standing legacy farms is no easy task, and the pressures often become too much for farmers. These stressors have been a large contributing factor to the increasing rate of suicide among farmers. Professor Stensrud wants to ensure that farmers in Iowa feel seen and appreciated while honoring their family's legacy and incredible accomplishments.

If Professor Stensrud's had one message to leave people with, it would be to show kindness and compassion to others. It is essential that we take care of those around us who struggle with their mental health or who are in a tough situation. His greatest joy and the motivation he has for being a professor is watching his graduates go on to positively impact others and make the world a better place. As Professor Stensrud would say, you may not be able to change the world, but you can change a life that goes on to save another life, and another after that. Making people feel loved and wanted is the first step, and one I believe we should all strive to achieve. We should not allow people to suffer in silence, rather be an ear for them. It is my honor to recognize Professor Robert Stensrud as our Iowan of the Week.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF JOHN CARLSON'S CAREER IN PUBLIC SERVICE

#### HON. MIKE GALLAGHER

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. GALLAGHER. Madam Speaker, today I rise in honor of the career and service of Hobart, Wisconsin resident, Mr. John Carlson.

Mr. Carlson's notable Transportation Security Administration (TSA) career began in 2002, serving as the Assistant Federal Security Director (AFSD) for the Outagamie County Regional Airport, where he played a major role in the start-up of several TSA activities and assumed responsibility for day-to-day aviation security. In 2006, he was reassigned as the AFSD-Generalist at the Austin Straubel International Airport (GRB) Hub and Spoke Federal Security Director (FSD) staff where he handled compliance oversight, customer service, property accountability, safety, and model workplace strategies.

Given his extensive knowledge and leadership skills, Mr. Carlson would go on to assume roles where he was trusted to oversee a majority of TSA operations in four separate airports in northern Wisconsin: Austin Straubel International Airport, (GRB), Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA), Rhinelander-Oneida County Airport (RHI) and Appleton International Airport (ATW formerly Outagamie County Regional Airport).

Before beginning his career of service with TSA, Mr. Carlson served the United States honorably for twenty years in the U.S. Army as an infantry and military intelligence officer until his retirement in 1995 as a Lieutenant Colonel. Mr. Carlson's dedication and leadership in the state of Wisconsin are incredibly valuable, and the service he provides to Northern Wisconsin and his country is remarkable.

As we look back on Mr. Carlson's career, there is no doubt that he dedicated his life and

career to making the world around him a safer, better place. Mr. Carlson's continued service to both his country and his community is worthy of our highest admiration.

#### HONORING FIREFIGHTER CRAIG NOLTE

#### HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Craig Nolte for his 36 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Nolte has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

#### VA TRANSPARENCY & TRUST ACT OF 2021

SPEECH OF

#### HON. MARK TAKANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 17, 2021*

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support Representative BOST's bipartisan legislation, the "VA Transparency and Trust Act," or H.R. 2911, and for which Representative PAPPAS, Representative MANN, and I are original co-sponsors. This bill provides additional oversight for the funds Congress made available to VA through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and the CARES Act in 2020, as well as the American Rescue Plan which we passed earlier this year.

The purpose of H.R. 2911 is to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a detailed plan for obligating and expending coronavirus pandemic funding made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security, or CARES Act, or the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. H.R. 2911 also requires the VA Office of Inspector General to report to Congress semi-annually on VA's actual expenditures and obligations, comparing it to their detailed plan, and on other subjects. Finally, H.R. 2911 requires the Comptroller General of the United States to report to Congress twice—in 2022 and 2024—



on VA's process for developing its funding request, among other subjects.

Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020, Congress has provided over \$36 billion dollars in supplemental funding—that is, funds that are in addition to VA's annual budget—to fund various pandemic-related operations and programs at VA.

Specifically, Congress provided to VA:

\$60 million in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act in March 2020 to support medical services and medical community care;

\$19.5695 billion in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act in March 2020 to support medical services, community care, medical facilities, informational technology systems, general administration, and other purposes; and \$16.694 billion in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 in January 2021 to support medical care and health needs, supply chain modernization, the VA Office of Inspector General, a COVID-19 veteran rapid retraining assistance program, and other purposes.

With these significant investments in VA operations and programs, legislation is needed to ensure that VA efficiently and effectively obligates and spends these funds to achieve Department goals. The legislation provides ongoing oversight opportunities for relevant Congressional committees until all funds have been expended and provides for the VA Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office to provide intermittent reviews of VA's spending and allocation process, similar to prior reporting.

H.R. 2911 adds to the existing oversight on VA's spending. It will enable greater transparency for Congress and the public to ensure that these funds are spent wisely to support critical VA programs and services as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### IN MEMORY OF JAMES FRALEY

#### HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. BARR. Madam Speaker, I would like to honor a special Kentuckian, Mr. James Fraley, from Bath County, Kentucky.

Mr. Fraley was born May 7, 1928 in Midland, Kentucky to World War I veteran Burns Fraley and Austa Fraley. He graduated from Salt Lick High School in 1948. After graduation, he enlisted in the United States Air Force, where he served in Korea, Japan, and stateside for 4 years. He was honorably discharged in October of 1954.

Following his military service, Mr. Fraley worked as one of the early Texas Eastern Transmission Pipeline employees in Wyoming for 35 years. After retiring, he drove a bus for Bath County Schools for 20 years, worked at Keeneland, was a 30-year member of the University of Kentucky's 101 Club, and served on the Owingsville City Council. He was a 71-year member of the Free and Accepted Masons of Kentucky, where he served in several leadership roles. Mr. Fraley was also a member of the Scottish Rite, the York Rite, Oleika Shrine Temple, and the Royal Order of Scotland. In 2018, Mr. Fraley received the Bath County Community Service Award in recognition for all the help and support he provided to

an untold number of children in need of medical assistance through the Shriners Hospital. Mr. Fraley was a servant leader who believed in helping others, particularly children.

Mr. Fraley was married to his late wife Becky for 65 years and they had four children. Through his service to his country and to his local community, Mr. Fraley certainly left a positive mark on this world. Mr. Fraley, a great American, passed away on March 19, 2021. I am humbled to honor the memory of Mr. James Fraley before the United States Congress.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF REVEREND E. BAXTER MORRIS

#### HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to Reverend E. Baxter Morris, the ninth and longest-serving pastor of the iconic First Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.

Rev. Morris was a graduate of Selma University with a Bachelor of Theology Degree. He studied at Alabama State University, Samford University Extension Division, and the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education. When he was still in school at Selma University, Rev. Morris was selected as First Baptist Church's newest pastor in 1972.

The First Baptist Church was founded by 700 newly freed Black citizens after the Emancipation Proclamation was recognized in Montgomery in 1866. Church members completed the first church in 1867 on Columbus Street. The Columbus Street Church was destroyed by a fire, but was painstakingly rebuilt brick by brick using any bricks the parishioners could find. Completed in 1915, it became affectionately known as the "Brick A Day" Church.

The First Baptist Church played a pivotal role in the civil rights movement. Under the pastorate of Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy, it became a meeting place for historic civil rights leaders. In 1961, it served as refuge for Freedom Riders who were subjected to mob violence at the Montgomery Greyhound Bus Station and was the target of a Klu Klux Klan attack when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights icons were worshipping inside.

For almost 50 years, Rev. Morris led the Brick A Day congregation and made it his mission to acknowledge and preserve its rich history, while also continuing the church's legacy of progress and social change. In addition to shepherding his own congregation, Rev. Morris served in various roles at several other religious organizations, including the Montgomery-Antioch District Association of Baptist Churches and Missionary for the Alabama Baptist South East District State Convention. He also dedicated more than 20 years of service to the Montgomery Police Department as chaplain.

Rev. Morris was a pillar in his community and the true epitome of a servant leader. Buoyed by the strength and example of his predecessors, Rev. Morris lived his life to give, to support, and to uplift his fellow man.

Every year, I bring young people from the Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center in Oakland, CA on the Faith and Politics Congress-

sional Civil Rights Pilgrimage. Rev. Morris always greeted them with enthusiasm, kindness, and appreciation. Upon learning of his passing, they were heartbroken because he taught them so much and had earned their respect and admiration.

Along with my youth leaders, I send our heartfelt condolences and love to Rev. Morris' family, the First Baptist Church family, loved ones, friends, and community.

Please join me in honoring Rev. E. Baxter Morris and his many contributions to First Baptist Church, and the community of Montgomery, AL.

#### HONORING FIREFIGHTER CHRISTOPHER ALBRIGHT

#### HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Christopher Albright for his 5 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Albright has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

#### HONORING ROBERT J. FINE, JR., OF ADMIRAL FARRAGUT ACADEMY

#### HON. CHARLIE CRIST

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. CRIST. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the outstanding contributions of Robert J. "Bob" Fine, Jr., Headmaster of Admiral Farragut Academy in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Mr. Fine is retiring from Admiral Farragut Academy after more than 30 years of service as an educator, administrator, coach, and leader in our local community. He first joined the school as a math teacher in 1989 and has served as Headmaster for more than two decades, beginning in 1998.

Mr. Fine is admired and beloved by hundreds of Farragut families and leaves an extraordinary legacy in the K-12 school's history. Under his exceptional leadership, the unique naval preparatory mission of Admiral Farragut Academy has endured since 1933, inspiring

young leaders in military and civilian service. Under his tenure, the school also became co-educational and expanded to create a lower school for young children.

Mr. Fine is a pillar in the 13th Congressional District of Florida, having served on numerous nonprofit boards, including the St. Petersburg

College Board of Trustees (where he served as Vice Chairman and Chairman), St. Petersburg College Foundation Board of Directors, Bayfront Medical Center Board of Directors, Florida Council of Independent Schools, Florida High School Athletic Association, and the

Association of Military Colleges and Schools of the United States.

Madam Speaker, it is my great honor to recognize the exemplary accomplishments in education and community service by Mr. Bob Fine before the U.S. House of Representatives.